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ABSTRACT

The use of mini-campaign projects in an introductory course in advertising can (1) provide students with actual experience in dealing with real advertising problems; (2) bring classroom lectures and laboratory assignments into a "real-world" perspective; (3) give students a broader perspective of advertising; (4) bring students into contact with persons they will be working with: printers, photographers, clients, artists, advertising representatives; and (5) help students decide whether advertising is an appropriate career choice. Students are divided into small groups and given an assignment that calls for the development of a marketing advertising plan, rough layouts and storyboards, and finished copy for ads and commercials, as well as the preparation of a media schedule and budget. The assignment also calls for a typewritten report and an oral presentation that include all the elements of campaign planning: situation analysis, marketing objectives and strategies, creative tactics, media objectives and strategies, media schedule, budget, and evaluation. Such mini-campaigns have been incorporated into the advertising program at Marquette University (Wisconsin), and by the time a student completes the program, he or she will have participated in at least four major advertising campaigns. (HOD)

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USING STUDENT AGENCIES TO PRODUCE MINI-CAMPAIGNS IN THE PRINCIPLES OF ADVERTISING COURSE

by

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CS 208 349

Presented to the Advertising Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication for presentation at the annual convention, Gainesville, Florida, August 1984.

The major objectives of this paper are to: 1) provide a rationale for the use of mini-campaign projects in the introductory course in advertising and 2) demonstrate how this assignment is done in the advertising program at Marquette University.

Concern for the basic thrust of advertising curricula is certainly not a new issue. A major question has always been one of positioning: should the principles course be professional in its orientation or should it be more general, something similar to introductory courses taught in the liberal arts? Preston addressed this issue in a joint session of this division and the Junior College Journalism Association at the Ft. Collins AEJ meeting.[1] He suggested that there would be broader student participation with the general course; that the general course was more compatible with the traditional academic programs. He also cited the benefit of larger enrollment with the general orientation. However, Preston also advised that the professional orientation is really closer to industry goals. He felt that students are more apt to learn if they are interested in the advertising business. They can also assess their capabilities in advertising better in the professionally oriented course. He felt, too, that there is a closer relationship between teachers and students in the professional course.

It is not argued here that the introductory course should be simply a skills course. The mini-campaign does require the preparation of ads and media plans but it is really a problem-solving orientation which requires research, analysis, objective-setting, strategy, and evaluation--in addition to execution of creative and media schedules. Support for this problem-solving approach is evident in the literature. Steilen says: "It is not wrong to suggest that we should continue to supply the advertising industry technical specialists. However, it is wrong to limit these specialists to only the technical or functional

aspects of advertising education. One alternative is to develop a professional management, decision-making oriented curriculum."[2] (p. 20) isolated from other disciplines, however, as Olins warns.[3] Instead, as Wright and Steilens recommend, "the ad department may design its own special courses into which the relevant information from economics, accounting, finance, production, management, and marketing may be compressed."[4] (p. 51)

Why this much fuss about the introductory course? Even with increases in advertising courses nationally, the basic course must be considered the foundation of our programs. It is argued here that this course can set the tone for the entire advertising curriculum. The industry agrees. According to Marquez, the introductory course was ranked as the most important course in an advertising program by agency leaders.[5]

Students benefit greatly from exposure to the campaign concept in the introductory course. Morris suggests that a campaign project: "1) provides actual experience in dealing with real advertising problems, 2) brings classroom lectures and laboratory assignments into a 'real-world' perspective, 3) gives the student a broader perspective of advertising, 4) brings him into contact with persons he will be working with: printers, photographers, clients, artists, advertising representatives, 5) helps the student in deciding whether advertising--especially an agency experience--is really the career choice for him"[6] (p. 30)

The advertising program at Marquette is structured around the idea of group projects in all courses, including the introductory course. The assignments are real problems, for real clients. There is considerable independent work by the student groups, but with frequent contact with faculty advisers and the professional "client" groups. These projects are essential in our program, which is limited to only four required courses (principles of advertising, copy and layout, media planning, and campaigns). When the Marquette student com-

pletes the advertising program, he or she will have participated in at least four major advertising campaigns.

Summary of assignment

The introductory class is divided into groups of 5 to 8 students each. Assignment to groups is random, with the exception of those students who in an assessment at the beginning of the semester declare that they have training or experience in the creative area. These students are divided evenly among the total number of groups. Each group is instructed to work independently on its own campaign.

The assignment includes developing a marketing/advertising plan, developing rough layouts and storyboards and writing finished copy for ads and commercials, as well as preparing a media schedule and budget. A type-written report, or "plans book," is turned in by each group. An oral presentation of the campaign is made before the class, the client, and invited guests. Oral reports, which concentrate on the creative, media, and budget portions of the campaign, are limited to 20 minutes, with 5 minutes for questions afterward. While class length necessitates that student groups make their presentations on consecutive days, all campaign plans books are due on the first day presentations are made. Presentations are sometimes videotaped for use by later classes.

Structure of course: Position of mini-campaign

The mini-campaign in the introductory advertising course at Marquette is based upon a module concept. The first half of the semester is devoted to fairly traditional instruction in advertising: history, social and economic effects, industry structure, and regulation. This instruction is supported by lectures, discussion, outside reading, and written/oral reports on current advertising issues and analyses of current advertising. About mid-term, the mini-campaign is assigned and agencies are formed. From that point on, the

student agencies complete each module of an advertising campaign as it is covered in the course, e.g. research, analysis, strategy and positioning, creative and media executions, budgeting, and campaign evaluation. The project culminates in the preparation of a plans book and a formal presentation to the client. A copy of campaign assignment materials is given in the Appendix.

Mini-campaign project requirements

Forty percent of a student's grade in the introductory course is accounted for by the campaign project, all of the work for which is done after mid-semester. The assignment requires a submission of a typed, bound plans book, consisting of a written explanation of all of the activities carried out in the planning and execution of the campaign, and a 20-minute oral summary presentation of the campaign before the client, the instructor, invited guests, and classmates.

All of the elements of campaign planning--situation analysis (including product description, market composition, competition, and target audience selection), problems and opportunities, marketing objectives and strategy, advertising objectives and strategy, creative objectives and strategy, creative tactics, media objectives and strategy, media schedule, budget, and evaluation--must be addressed both in the plans book and in the oral presentation. It is suggested that the presentation emphasize the creative execution of campaign strategies--the communications aspects of the marketing problem and its solutions. Rough layouts and storyboards are required for the plans book and the presentation.

Total points devoted to the assignment are divided equally between the written report and the oral presentation. Individual students' grades may be raised or lowered in the event of especially favorable or unfavorable peer evaluations. A copy of peer and client evaluation forms is found in the Appen-

dix. Although client feedback is welcomed, the instructor makes the final grade assignments based on how well students met the overall objectives of the course and the assignment.

Student groups and job descriptions

Included in the package of materials explaining the project are suggested group responsibilities for individual members. These positions include account representative, research director, art/production director, copy chief, media director, new business director, and, in the event that the client is providing funds to defray audio-visual and production costs, treasurer. In some instances, several students in the same agency may collaborate on research activities early in the campaign planning process. It is not unusual for one student to take on responsibilities in more than one specialized area. Division of duties depends heavily on group composition, size, and compatibility of out-of-class schedules for agency meetings and work periods.

A copy of suggested group responsibilities is included in the Appendix section of this paper.

Use of peer evaluations

One of the major hurdles with group projects is, of course, faculty observation of student participation and the question of fair evaluation of student contributions. There is a potential in group projects for erratic performance by certain students which can lead to a morale problem. Peer evaluations seem to help in this regard. According to Meiss, using peer evaluations provides "more clearly defined evaluative criteria, more positive student attitudes toward group projects, oral presentations, and how both are graded, increased student attention during peer presentations, and greater skill in making critical judgments."[7] (p.27)

Problems with mini-campaigns projects

There are group dynamics problems in any group project. Peer evaluations seem to help alleviate this problem. It is important, however, to remind students that they must progress on the project at a pace similar to the class schedule. It is useful to have interim reports to the instructor as each major division of the campaign is completed.

Another problem relates to agency structure. Usually most students want to be either account executives or creative directors. It is important that individual interests and talents are balanced in each group. At Marquette, students are surveyed early in the semester to determine their interests, skills, and performances in related courses.

Another potential problem is the perception of competition with other groups. While competition is certainly a part of the advertising industry, we feel that it is best to introduce the notion of competition gradually over the junior and senior years. We attempt to control this by having the various agency groups in the introductory class participate in different campaigns for the same client. For example, the class developed a campaign for the Milwaukee County Zoo a year ago and the four student agencies each produced a campaign for four different markets. There is still plenty of competition with this format, but it is controlled and easier for this group of younger students to handle.

Successes with mini-campaign projects

Mini-campaign projects in the introductory advertising class have provided a strong foundation for more specialized advanced courses by allowing students to apply the principles learned in lecture to a real-world situation with a local client.

From the instructors' perspective, we have found that the quality of work has improved over the past few semesters as students seem to set higher standards for themselves each semester. More examples of plans books and videotapes of presentations are available each semester, and students have the benefit of learning from other classes' successes and failures. Improvements have been effected in the quality of rough layouts, audio-visual materials, plans books, and especially in oral presentations.

Having representatives of the client company present for the campaign presentations provides a real-world situation in which the students can present their work. Additionally, it gives the college's advertising program an opportunity to display individual student talent and to demonstrate its effectiveness in preparing students to execute a full-scale project on deadline. Two area clients have used information from the student reports in their recent marketing efforts.

The mini-campaign, though very demanding of students' time and energies, is valued as an important hands-on component of a course the remainder of whose content is largely lecture-oriented. Excerpts from many student course evaluation forms reflect the attitude that the two classroom activities complement one another:

> "I really enjoyed the class....the group project was managed very well and I gained a lot from it."
>
> "...one of the first classes in my college career that has taught me somthing--a marketable skill."
>
> "_____....gave us a good opportunity to use what we learned in our campaign."
>
> "I liked the campaign idea. I feel it is the only effective way to get a "feel" for what advertising is all about. The only part I found difficult was if a group followed the book and class lectures exactly, that does not leave enough time to pull together details of the presentation -- groups have to work ahead."

"I felt that this course was really good and I learned more in it than I have in any other course I've taken here. The outline gave a good overview of the advertising industry as well as necessary specifics. The campaign idea/project was great. I learned a lot on my own in working with my campaign."

"The format and objective of this class are excellent. Creating an advertising campaign with the aid of _____ and the textbook is the best learning experience. I believe learning by doing is the best method of instruction."

Summary

A mini-campaign is an effective way to integrate a practical exercise with the traditional study of advertising in the introductory course. It is interesting to students and gives them more direct exposure to the subject matter than would a general orientation. The project is realistic, with group, rather than individual, work. It exposes students to real marketing problems and to real professionals. It gradually introduces the notion of competition. It also gives each student, in addition to the experience gained, a personal copy of a plans book, which we have found to be invaluable for students in job searching after graduation.

The project provides students their first opportunity to "specialize" in a particular agency position or positions, and to evaluate their own performance in those areas. Groups are kept to a workable size (5 to 8 students) so that none of the members loses sight of the project's "total picture" or agency operation. A group structure for the project has the added benefit of placing students in positions of responsibility where teamwork is essential in order to meet deadlines for layouts, scripts, and manuscripts. Group members are encouraged to treat the project as if it were a job.

There are problems with group dynamics but most of them are reduced with interim contact with the instructor, peer evaluations, and controlled competition.

For a copy of the syllabus used in this course at Marquette, please write to either author.

And now, we would like to show you a portion of a presentation made by a recent student group to a client. We have a copy of the plans book as well if you would like to see it.

Notes

[1]Preston, Ivan. "Differences between professional orientation and general orientation in teaching the introductory advertising course," in The Introductory Advertising Course, Jerry R. Lynn and Thomas A. Bowers (eds.), Advertising Division, Association for Education in Journalism, 1973, pp. 12-17.

[2] Steilen, Charles F. "Advertising needs decision makers," Journalism Educator, Fall, 1971, Vol. 26, No. 3, pp. 20-21.

[3]Olins, Robert A. "On ad education--Who's selling what?" Journalism Educator, April, 1974, Vol. 29, No. 1, pp. 39-40.

[4]Wright, John S. and Charles F. Steilen, "Ad majors should be learning more about modern business," Journalism Educator, January, 1976, Vol. 30, No. 4, pp. 49-51.

[5]Marquez, F.T. "Agency presidents rank ad courses, job opportunities," Journalism Educator, July, 1980, Vol. 35, No. 2, pp. 46-47.

Morris, Jim R. "Class functions as ad agency; job offers increase," Journalism Educator, October, 1973, Vol. 28, No. 3, pp. 28-30.

Meiss, Guy T. "Evaluating peers in group projects," Journalism Educator, Winter, 1984, Vol. 38, No. 4, pp. 25-27.

Appendix

Campaign Assignment

Journalism 140
Semester Project
Spring 1984

The semester project is the development of an advertising campaign sponsored by the Milwaukee Chapter of the Business/Professional Advertising Association (B/PAA) for Marquette University. All class groups will have the same client--Premiere Projection, Inc.

ASSIGNMENT:

Each group in the class will work on its own campaign. Groups will work independently. Our assignment includes developing a marketing/advertising plan, developing rough layouts and storyboards and writing finished copy for ads/commercials, preparing a media schedule and budget, and presenting the plan orally in class.

A type-written report, or "plans book," will be turned in by each group. It will include all areas of the campaign. The oral presentation should concentrate on the creative, media, and budget portions of the campaign. Our oral reports will be limited to 20 minutes, with five minutes for questions.

All campaign reports and creative work are due on the same day for all groups, regardless of order of presentation. Presentation order will be determined by random selection.

GROUP ORGANIZATION:

You should plan an organizational meeting now to become acquainted and to generally discuss such matters as meeting times/places during the semester, assignments, deadlines, instructor liaison (each group should appoint one), and to share phone numbers and addresses. It is strongly suggested that you not postpone your organizational meeting. Poor performance on this project can generally be traced to late starts and poor organization.

You will receive a handout outlining suggested areas of specialization/duties for individual members of your group. The group should work together whenever possible, particularly in the initial planning stages of the campaign. This eliminates confusion later in the project.

PRELIMINARY RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS:

To be provided by Premiere Projection, Inc.

TACTICS:

After the written plan has been developed, you should carry out the three major tactical areas: budget, media scheduling, and creative. For this course, we will not expect complete media schedules showing the entire expenditure for space and time. Examples of schedules for key media will be sufficient. You will prepare, however, a comprehensive budget. Copies of the SRDS will be available in the Journalism Reading Room and the Ad/Magazine Lab. For creative work, you will produce rough layouts and finished copy. You should prepare examples for each major medium employed in the campaign, e.g., newspaper, magazine, outdoor, etc.

PRESENTATION:

You will have only 20 minutes for your group presentation. Of course, you cannot present all of the work that is presented in your plans book. Organization is important. So is rehearsal. Briefly summarize your market review and strategy/objectives. Spend most of the time showing how you are spending the client's money and where (creative ideas, media selection, and budget). Dress appropriately--this is a formal and professional presentation made before our client.

The use of audio-visual materials is recommended. You will have a budget of $50 for materials needed.

EXAMPLES:

Written campaign reports and videotapes from previous classes' oral presentations will be reviewed in class and made available on loan-out from the instructor.

EVALUATION:

The project will receive two grades: one for the Plans Book and one for the oral presentation. In addition, students will fill out peer evaluation forms for individual members' contributions to the overall group project. These ratings will constitute another criterion for assigning grades. B/PAA will provide professional evaluation of the plans book and all presentations and will present plaques to members of the winning team. All others will receive certificates of participation.

FINAL, OPTIMISTIC NOTE:

If you're feeling somewhat overwhelmed after reading the project description, that's not unusual. The campaign project is a high-involvement activity, and requires cooperation on the part of all group members. Take heart--many

have successfully negotiated the campaign project--and had fun doing it. The group experience should be highly rewarding to you, plus this year we have the added bonus of working with a professional advertising association.

SUGGESTED CAMPAIGN OUTLINE:

Situation Analysis

- Product description
- Market composition
- Competition
- Target audience selection

Problems and Opportunities

Marketing Objectives and Strategy (market share orientation)

Advertising Objectives and Strategy (communications orientation)

Creative Objectives and Strategy

Creative Tactics

- Rough layouts
- Finished copy for representative media

Media Objectives and Strategy

Media Schedule (sample only)

Budget (appropriation and allocation)

SUGGESTED GROUP RESPONSIBILITIES:

Below are suggested individual job descriptions for members of your campaign groups. Groups of tasks may be subdivided further depending on individual specialization and preference.

1. Account representative: overall coordination, scheduling, primary responsibility for situation analysis, strategy, objectives, positioning, and target audience selection.

2. Research director: responsible for primary and secondary research and ad testing and campaign evaluation.

3. Art/production director: responsible for layout, typography, illustrations for all ads; production of presentation materials.

4. Copy chief: responsible for selling concept, headlines, body copy, logotype, etc.

5. Media director: media/audience research, selection and evaluation of media; media plan

6. New business director: responsible for planning the presentation to the client and producing the audio-visual materials; responsible for lighting, equipment, materials to be used in presentation.

7. Treasurer: to administer funds provided by B/PAA.

Again, these are suggestions. Some groups may want to devote more emphasis to creative strategy and execution, or to copy testing. In some cases, one person could take on at least partial responsibility for more than one task area.

Overall, the campaign experience should be one of high-involvement, though many group members (depending on their specialization) will have periods of heavy responsibility as well as fairly light responsibility.

Case Study Project
for Current Semester's Campaign

THE MODEL X-1500 AUDIOVISUAL CENTER

Produced by: Premiere Projection, Inc. -- a major supplier of audiovisual projection equipment, and the only company to offer overhead, slide and video projectors. Annual sales are $50,000,000. PPI has been in business for 25 years and their projectors are widely used by educational institutions.

Product Position: The Model X-1500 marks a break-through in projection equipment as it is the first multiple-use projector. It may be used for overheads, 35mm slides, 1/2-inch VHS video and can accept signal from a personal computer in order to project a large image on a screen for viewing by a large group. Until the Model X-1500 was introduced, presenters had to use separate machines for each function.

Major Features:

1. Patented, light-concentrating four-stage spheroid mirror/lens optical system enables the projector to use four 100-watt light bulbs yet match brightness of conventional projectors.

2. Light bulbs used are the same bulbs used in lamps and other common fixtures. Bulbs are extremely easy to replace and have an average life of 100 hours each.

3. Remote control cordless slide changing is standard. A hand-sized changer, similar to a garage door opener contains forward, backward and focus functions.

4. Exclusive new automatic feed for overheads is operated by the same remote control unit used to change slides.

5. Overhead projector uses same lens as the slide/video projector. This, plus the remote control changer, permits the unit to be located in the rear of the room and not interfere with anyone's view of the screen.

6. Tough, Lexan housing is designed for rough handling often involved with multiple-user environments.

7. Automatic power cord retrieval neatly stores cord when unplugged from wall outlet. Power cord is 12-feet long when fully extended.

8. Unit is extremely portable, weighing 18 lbs.

9. Model X-1500 is UL listed.

Distribution: PPI sells direct to audiovisual dealers, who in turn sell to users. PPI has 40 salesmen calling on these dealers throughout the U.S.

Pricing: The Model X-1500 carries a list price of $3400. Dealer cost is $2400 and offers dealers the standard margins found in the audiovisual industry. Sales goal for the first year is 5000 units.

Major Markets:

1. College and University classrooms where Premiere Projection equipment is well known. Instructors may initiate requests for new equipment, but department heads and administrators must give approval. Larger schools will a have central purchasing department that will then obtain the equipment. Many larger schools and universities will also have instructional media centers which purchase and maintain audiovisual equipment, lending it to instuctors as needed.

2. High schools. PPI is well known to this market. School principals and school administrators are major yes-no decision makers. Some districts centralize purchases, others allow individual schools to buy as needed, within their budget.

Competition: Since no one else makes a multi-purpose projector, competition is in the form of single-function units. Average list prices for these are as follow: commercial-quality slide projector $300; overhead projector $150; video projector $2500. The projection of a computer output has been addressed by only one, very small company and their unit lists for $1200.

Kodab is the industry leader in slide projectors and overhead projectors with annual sales in these two categories of $40,000,000.

Panasound is the leader in video projection with annual sales of video cassette recorders and projectors nearing $100,000,000.

Client Evaluation Form

PANEL EVALUATION

Group: _____

Panelist: _____

Please grade each of the following on a scale of 0.0 to 4.0 (1.5 - 2.5 would be considered an "average" range).

SCALE

_____ SITUATION ANALYSIS (research):

_____ PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES:

_____ TARGET AUDIENCE SELECTION:

_____ POSITIONING:

_____ AD OBJECTIVES & GOALS:

_____ COPY TESTING & CAMPAIGN EVALUATION:

_____ CREATIVE EXECUTION:

_____ MEDIA RECOMMENDATIONS:

_____ BUDGET:

_____ PRESENTATION STYLE, INCLUDING A/V:

_____

List any major strengths of this presentation:

List any major weaknesses of this presentation:

Peer Evaluation Form

Group ID ( )
Your Name _____ _____

Name of Student being Evaluated:

_____

Rating Scale

Superior:* The student performed at an outstanding level in all phases of the project, including leadership, contributions of time and ideas, technical quality of work, and ability to cooperate in your group.

Above Average: The student's contribution were, although not superior, above average. The student made most meetings, was enthusiastic and cooperative, and contributed more than an average amount and higher than the average quality of contributions.

AVERAGE: Overall, the student's contributions were adequate; a minimal level of acceptability. The student did not adversely affect the project but did not make more than an average number of contributions nor was the quality of contributions higher than average.

Below Average: Overall, the student's contributions were below average. While some work was performed, both the quantity and quality was below average. No leadership was given. The student missed meetings and was generally uncooperative.

Inferior:* Overall, the student made no meaningful contributions to the project. The student attended few meetings, missed deadlines, and did not produce either a satisfactory level or amount of contributions to the project. The student was generally uncooperative and offered no leadership.

INSTRUCTIONS: Insert your name and the name of the student you are evaluating in the spaces provided at the top of this page.

Then, circle the one rating in the left-hand column above which best represents your view of the student's overall performance in the project.

You are encouraged to add a written description of the student's performance on the back of this sheet. *It is required that this be done, with examples, for anyone for which you have assigned either a "Superior" or "Inferior" evaluation.

These ratings are, and will remain, confidential. Your frank and honest evaluation is required in order to provide fair grades to all students.

Please return these forms to your instructor on the day indicated in your syllabus (see "Class Schedule").